

(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Port Royal Road  
other names/site number Old Port Royal Road

**2. Location**

street & number North of the Red River just west of State Highway 238, adjacent to the modern Port Royal Rd NA ☐ not for publication  
city or town Port Royal ☒ vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Montgomery code 125 zip code 37043

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Port Royal Road  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private  
☐ public-local  
☒ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☒ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

### Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road related

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian related

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA

walls N/A

roof N/A

other earth

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations NA**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Native American

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

TRANSPORTATION

**Period of Significance**

1838

**Significant Dates**

1838—Detachments leave southern Tennessee

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Center for Historic Preservation, Middle TN State University

Montgomery County, Tennessee  
County and State

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre. Sango 303 SW

1	<u>16</u>	<u>487185</u>	<u>4045801</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>487236</u>	<u>4045537</u>

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Port Royal Road, Montgomery County, TN

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## OWNERS

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation:

Port Royal State Park, c/o Bob Wells  
3300 Old Clarksville Highway  
Adams, Tennessee 37010

Jim Fyke, Commissioner  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
401 Church Street  
L & C Annex, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0435

John Evans  
2963 Port Royal Road  
Adams, Tennessee 37010

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Port Royal Road, Montgomery County, TN

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Port Royal Road or Old Port Royal Road is a remnant of an earlier Indian trail and early nineteenth-century stagecoach road that provided access to the Ohio River. This 300-yard segment is located on the eastern border of Montgomery County, just north of the Red River and west of the modern roadway and bridge that bypassed the old road. The nominated property follows the path of the old covered bridge road, which was bypassed in 1955 by the newer road, State Highway 238, also known as Port Royal Road. The well-defined historic roadbed is twenty to twenty-two feet wide and continues for one-fifth of a mile, with approximately three-quarters of the historic roadbed being inside the Port Royal Historic State Park. The road segment is unsurfaced with wooded areas on either side. Helping define the roadbed are eroded banks ranging in height from one to six feet high. Along the path and within the park are remnants of picnic tables and a noncontributing small outdoor interpretive pavilion that measures approximately twelve feet by fifteen feet and is near the southern boundary of the nominated property. Once outside the park, the trail remains well-defined continuing for about sixty feet before ending at a ridgeline and a cluster of more modern development. The area surrounding the road segment is wooded and mostly rural with sparse development nearby that does not affect the overall setting.

The Cherokee Indians traveled through Port Royal in 1838 during their forced removal from their eastern lands. Because the river's banks are quite steep, it is likely the Cherokee detachments crossed the Red River on some sort of bridge rather than a ferry to get to this portion. This is supported by the Goodspeed's history of Montgomery County that makes reference to a bridge across the Red River as early as 1832. Although modern development has destroyed evidence of the trail in many places, this intact portion of the historic roadbed is on the north side of the Red River at Port Royal. On the west side of the newly constructed highway bridge, the historic path begins away from the river's banks in a forested area. Erosion and wash have destroyed the roadbed closest to the river.

Port Royal State Historic Park is located on State Highway 238 at the junction of Red River and Sulfur Fork in Montgomery County and is the site of one of Tennessee's earliest settlements. Once a thriving trading center of several-hundred residents, Port Royal is now a state historic area and contains twenty-six acres with only a few remaining buildings. Today, Port Royal features a brand new highway bridge stretching across the Red River. Although the former town's significance in late eighteenth and nineteenth century river and road transportation is still visible, just the historic roadbed associated with the Trail of Tears is being nominated.

The old Port Royal Road that includes the nominated section served the area until 1955 when a concrete bridge over the Red River was built just east of the old bridge, bypassing the old Port Royal Road. Remnants remain of a reconstructed covered bridge across the Red River that used to lead to the nominated property. An older covered bridge at this location served Port Royal from 1904 through 1955. This covered bridge deteriorated and fell into the river in 1972. In 1977 the State of Tennessee acquired twenty-two acres and rebuilt the covered bridge, which was partially washed away during a storm in 1998.

The nominated property is partially within the northern section of the Port Royal State Park that stretches along the north and south sides of the Red River. The park headquarters are in a renovated Masonic Lodge (1859) at the junction of State Highway 238 and the Old Clarksville-Springfield Road. The park also features the now-pedestrian Sulfur Fork Bridge (1890), built with a Pratt truss design by the Converse Bridge Company. Since 1978 the now twenty-six acres have been designated a State Historic Area. The

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western section of the park where the road segment remains is closed off to visitors because of the unsafe condition of the re-built covered bridge and the financial difficulties of the park. On the north side of the park but east of the new bridge is a canoe rental building, which displays a sign making reference to the area's Trail of Tears significance.

The Port Royal Road was identified as an intact segment of the Trail within the "Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources Associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears" Multiple Property Submission by Thomason and Associates (2003) and in Benjamin Nance's *The Trail of Tears in Tennessee: A Study of the Routes Used During the Cherokee Removal of 1838* (2001) as survey site number 40MT637.

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Port Royal Road is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion A with local significance by virtue of its status as one of the most-intact surviving segments of the Northern Route of the Cherokee Removal through Tennessee. It meets criterion A for its historical significance in the areas of Native American ethnic heritage, politics and government, and transportation. Almost 12,000 Cherokee Indians or eleven of the thirteen detachments that were forced to leave their homes crossed this segment of road in the fall of 1838 and the winter of 1839 during what is commonly known as the Trail of Tears.

With the earliest permanent settlers arriving in 1784, Port Royal was important as an early trading center because of its location at the junction of the Red River and Sulfur Fork and on an old Indian trail. With access to the Ohio River via the Red River, steamboats served Port Royal into the 1870s. As roads improved and rail lines became accessible, however, Port Royal's significance as a river transportation post dwindled. The road itself, however, has greater significance for its association with the Trail of Tears.

Eleven of the thirteen detachments, making up 11,700 Cherokee, who were forcibly removed from North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, took the "Northern Route" of the Trail of Tears (See Tables 1 and 2 for the specifics). This Northern Route began in the southern portion of Tennessee near Charleston or present-day Chattanooga. The Trail crossed Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and finally to Oklahoma. The detachments that followed the Northern Route (and the alternate Taylor's and Hildebrand routes) headed north from camps in the vicinity of Cherokee Agency or Ross's Landing (NR 6/27/74) at present-day Chattanooga through McMinnville, Murfreesboro, and Nashville. The detachments crossed the Cumberland River in Nashville over an 1823 suspension bridge that was the only major bridge that crossed the river in Middle Tennessee at that time. The detachments then headed northwest roughly following what is now Highway 431 or Whites Creek Pike. From here they took secondary roads to the town of Port Royal in Montgomery County. The Elijah Hicks detachment and maybe others camped in Port Royal. The exact location of the Hicks campsite is not known. From Port Royal, the Northern Route headed north into Kentucky, just west of the city of Guthrie.

Most of the 285 miles over land that the Trail of Tears covered in Tennessee have been covered over with asphalt, widened, and modernized to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of motorized cars. However, portions of the trail do remain as bypassed stretches of larger roads and highways. Some of these remaining segments have been completely abandoned, incorporated into agricultural, or logging roads, or used as private drives. A portion of the Port Royal Road over which the Cherokee removal occurred has been incorporated into the Port Royal State Park for use as a "natural" walking trail.

Port Royal was named by the Samuel Wilcox family who had previously lived in Port Royal, South Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The town was incorporated in 1797 and secured its first post office in 1801, which remained open until 1940. The plan of the town included 31 acres, featuring a two-acre square and 36 half-acre lots.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ralph L. Winters, *Historical Sketches of Adams, Robertson County and Port Royal, Montgomery County Tennessee: 1779-1968*. (Clarksville, TN: privately printed, 1968), 1.

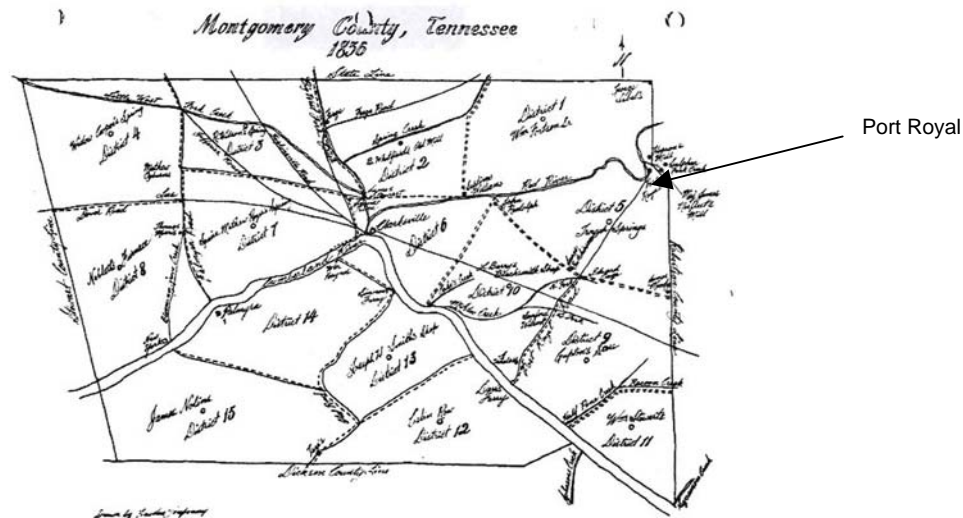
<sup>2</sup> *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee*. Reprinted from *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee* (1886). (Columbia, TN: Woodward and Stinson Printing Co., 1972), 824.



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Town organizers situated the community along old Indian trails and the important river junction. In 1832 the state classified the Montgomery County roads. Those of first class status included "that from Hopkinsville to Nashville by way of Port Royal," that from "Clarksville to Port Royal by John Edmonston's old place, and that from the Red River bridge to Benton."<sup>3</sup> Clearly, Port Royal was well situated and community leaders saw great economic potential for the town's future.



By the time of the Cherokee removal in 1838, Port Royal was a well-established and thriving community. The majority of detachments crossed the Red River at Port Royal. A letter from detachment leader Elijah Hicks to Cherokee Chief John Ross reveals his detachment camped at Port Royal on October 14, 1838. Although not mentioned, they probably re-stocked supplies at Port Royal. The earlier voluntary removal party, led by B. B. Cannon in 1837, also camped at or near Port Royal.<sup>4</sup> Both groups crossed the Red River to the north side where the historic roadbed remains visible. Goodspeed's history mentions a bridge across the Red River as early as 1832, but it is not known if detachment leaders crossed this bridge or by ferry.

Following the Trail of Tears, Port Royal was a prosperous industrial community with easy river access. Local industries included sawmills, grist and four mills, and blacksmiths that shipped products by flatboat or steamboat from Port Royal to the Cumberland and Ohio rivers. An early sawmill and gristmill was Woolfolk

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 785.

<sup>4</sup> Gary Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross: Volume I, 1807-1839* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 684; Benjamin C. Nance, *The Trail of Tears in Tennessee: A Study of the Routes Used During the Cherokee Removal of 1838* (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Archaeology, 2001): 32.

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and Norfleet's Mill.<sup>5</sup> Later, R.L. Reding operated a successful broom factory and was awarded a gold medal at the 1904 World's in St. Louis.<sup>6</sup> In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Port Royal's economy suffered with the improvement of roads and the construction of the first area railroad in 1859 seven miles northeast of Port Royal through Red River Station, now Adams, Tennessee. Industries began utilizing the railroad to ship goods through this area in neighboring Robertson County. In addition, the area's iron industry suffered during the Civil War, and the development of the industry in Alabama reduced shipments of iron through Port Royal.<sup>7</sup> Residents gradually left Port Royal for places like Adams and Clarksville, and by 1940 the post office closed.

The Port Royal Historic Area was established in 1978 to preserve and protect the history of this early river town. The state rebuilt the covered bridge, but a tornado destroyed it in 1998. Port Royal is a day-use park featuring hiking, picnicking, canoeing, and fishing.

The Port Royal Road maintains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, and association as an intact portion of the Northern Route of the Trail of Tears. Utilized by almost 12,000 Cherokee during their forced removal to Oklahoma, this road is a significant resource in the Tennessee Trail of Tears.

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<sup>5</sup> Winters, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Carroll Van West, "Port Royal Historic Area," in *Tennessee Encyclopedia* (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 745.

<sup>7</sup> Ursula S. Beach, *Montgomery County* (Memphis: Memphis State University, 1988), 23.

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**Table 1: Cherokee Detachments Who Took the Northern Route**

Conductor	Assistant	Departure Location	Disbandment Location	Date of Departure	Date of Arrival
Hair Conrad (replaced by Colston prior to departure)	Daniel Colston	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian territory	23 Aug 1838	17 Jan 1839
Elijah Hicks	White Path (died en route- replaced by William Arnold)	Gunstocker Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	1 Sep 1838	4 Jan 1839
Jesse Bushyhead	Roman Nose	Chatata Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	3 Sep 1838	27 Feb 1839
Situwakee	Evan Jones	Savannah Branch, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	7 Sep 1838	2 Feb 1839
Old Field	Stephen Foreman	Candies Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	24 Sep 1838	23 Feb 1839
Moses Daniel	George Still	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	30 Sep 1838	2 Mar 1839
Choowalooka (replaced by Thomas N. Clark at Smith's Ferry)	J.D. Wofford	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	14 Sep 1838	? Mar 1839
James Brown	?	Ooltewah Creek, near Vann's Plantation	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	10 Sep 1838	5 Mar 1839
George Hicks	Collins McDonald	Mouse Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	7 Sep 1838	14 Mar 1839
Richard Taylor	Red Watt Adair	Near Vann's Plantation	Woodhall Farm Indian Territory	20 Sep 1838	24 Mar 1839
Peter Hildebrand	James Hildebrand	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Indian Territory	23 Oct 1838	18 Mar 1839

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Table 2: Statistics for Cherokee Detachments Who Took the Northern Route

Conductor	Depart	Arrive	Births	Deaths	Desertions	Accessions	Wagons & Teams	Riding Horses
Hair Conrad (replaced by Daniel Colston)	729	654	9	57	24	14	36	288
Elijah Hicks	858	744	5	54	---	---	43	344
Jesse Bushyhead	950	898	6	38	148	171	48	334
Situwakee	1250	1033	5	71	---	---	60	480
Old Field	983	921	19	57	10	6	49	392
Moses Daniel	1035	924	6	48	---	---	52	415
Choowalooka (replaced by Thomas N. Clark at Smith's Ferry)	1150	970	---	---	---		58	462
James Brown	850	717	3	34	---	---		
George Hicks	1118	1039	---	---	---	---	56	448
Richard Taylor	1029	942	15	55	---	---		
Peter Hildebrand	1766	1311	---	55	---	---	88	705
<b>TOTAL</b>	11,718	10,153						

Sources for the Tables 1 and 2:

Thomason and Associates, "Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Cherokee Trail of Tears,"  
Multiple Property Submission. Submitted to the National Park Service, 2003.Jones, William S. "Bill" Jones. "Tennessee Places: The Legacy of the Trail of Tears in Van Buren County."  
*Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXIII (Spring 2004): 52.

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The boundary for the Port Royal Road is shown on the attached USGS map. The nominated portion of the road includes the most intact section of the Trail of Tears route and stretches one-fifth of a mile from within the northern section of the Port Royal State Park and continues out of the park. It reaches its northern boundary at a ridgeline before reaching more modern development at the top of the ridge. The width of the nominated property is 100 feet on either side of the centerline of the road.

The boundaries for the nominated property include the most intact portion of the road. At the southern boundary within the Port Royal State Park is a noncontributing picnic pavilion. The nominated road continues north for one-fifth of a mile from the pavilion to a ridgeline forming the northern boundary. At the top of the ridge is a cluster of modern development. The nominated one-fifth of a miles section maintains the highest degree of integrity.

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## PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Port Royal Road  
Port Royal State Historic Area  
Montgomery County, Tennessee  
Photographs taken by Dr. Carroll Van West  
Date: February 2002  
Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission will need negatives

### Photographs:

- 1 of 5: Port Royal Road
- 2 of 5: Port Royal Road
- 3 of 5: Port Royal Road with noncontributing shelter and picnic tables
- 4 of 5: Port Royal Road with picnic tables
- 5 of 5: Port Royal Road